

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-31 are now pending in the present application. The allowability of claims 6 and 28 is gratefully acknowledged. Reconsideration of the remaining claims is respectfully requested in light of the amendment and remarks herein.

OBJECTIONS THE DRAWINGS:

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) for failing to show every feature claimed. Claim 8 defines, among other things, that the second end of the trailing arm is cylindrically shaped. Applicants contend that this arrangement is shown in the accompanying drawings. Specifically, each of Figs. 3-6 depict a cylindrically-shaped end 60 defining a cylindrical aperture 68 extending therethrough. Claim 9 has been cancelled.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1-4, 7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by VanDenberg, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0130480. Claim 1, as amended, defines a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms each having a second end comprising an aperture that receives a bushing of a frame bracket assembly therein, wherein the aperture of the second end of each trailing arm is oval-shaped, thereby causing a non-symmetrical compression of the bushing about the pivot axis. VanDenberg '480 fails to disclose such a configuration, and therefore cannot anticipate that which is defined in claim

1. The oval-shaped bushing aperture as defined in claim 1 provides non-symmetrical compression of the associated bushing, while simultaneously reducing the manufacturing costs that would be associated with construction of the VanDenberg '480 design.

Claim 4 has been cancelled and claim 5 amended into independent form, which is discussed below.

Claim 12 defines a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms each having a second end comprising a lip extending radially outward from an aperture and at least one engagement surface extending radially outward from the lip and adapted to abut a bushing-removal tool. Claim 12 was rejected on the grounds that VanDenberg '480 disclosed at least one engagement surface extending radially outward from a lip and adapted to abut a bushing-removal tool. However, Applicants can find no such disclosure. It is noted that claim 12 defines a lip that extends radially outward from the aperture and at least one engagement surface extending radially outward from the lip.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 5, 13, 22-27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over VanDenberg '480. Claim 5, as amended, defines a suspension system that includes, among other things, a pair of trailing arms each comprising a second end having an aperture that receives a bushing from one pair of frame bracket assemblies therein, the aperture defining an inner surface, wherein the inner surface

is roughed. Claim 5 was rejected on the grounds that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a rough inner surface or to increase the roughness so as to increase the rotational resistance caused since it is old and well-known that bushings are often press fit or vulcanized for this purpose. It is noted that providing a press-fit of a bushing within a particular aperture does not result in a roughed-inner surface of such aperture, and that vulcanizing relates to treating the material of which the bushing itself would be constructed, and also does result in a rough-surface within the interior of the aperture, nor would this approach render obvious a roughed inner surface. Moreover, the apparatus as defined in claim 5 would not require special toolings so as to press fit the bushing into the aperture, nor would it require a separate process of vulcanizing the bushing material, and therefore cannot be rendered obvious in light of such processes.

Independent claim 22 was rejected on the grounds that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to manufacture the trailing arms according to old and well-known metal forming processes such as casting, welding, forging, hydroforming, magniforming, etc. However, claim 22, as amended, defines a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms that each include a second end having a cantilevered lip extending radially outward from an aperture thereof. VanDenberg '480 does not disclose a

cantilevered lip that would provide a sufficient area so as to abut an associated hanger bracket and define operating limits, as illustrated in Figs. 17A and 17B.

Claims 10, 11, 21, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over VanDenberg '480 in view of Smith et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,241,266. Claim 10 defines, as amended, a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms including a first end having a mating surface that comprises a cavity that is completely encapsulated when the trailing arm is coupled to the axle, thereby reducing a localized stress transferred from the trailing arm to the axle. Neither VanDenberg '480 nor Smith et al., '266 disclose such a configuration, either singularly or held in combination. Such an encapsulated cavity simultaneously reduces localized stress as transmitted from the axle to the trailing beam and corrosion problems that would exist should the cavity be exposed to ambient conditions.

Claims 16-18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dilling et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,366,237. Claim 16 defines a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms each comprising an outwardly-extending shock support tang operably coupled to a shock absorber, wherein each of the trailing arms comprises a single-cast piece. Although Dilling et al. does disclose an outwardly-extending shock-absorbing tang, Dilling et al. fails to disclose such a tang as being formed as an integral part of the associated structure. In fact, Dilling et al. does not disclose how the shock-absorbing tang is

attached to the associated structure. Such formation results in a significant reduction of cost by eliminating separate manufacturing steps.

Claim 18 defines a suspension system that comprises, among other things, a pair of trailing arms, each including a second end having a top surface comprising a first portion and a second portion, wherein the second portion is adapted to support an air spring thereon, and wherein the second portion extends above the first portion, thereby substantially reducing an amount of contact between the trailing arm and a boot of the air spring when the air spring is in a deflated condition. Claim 18 was rejected on the grounds that Dilling et al. discloses a top surface comprising a first portion and a second portion, wherein the second portion is adapted to support one of a pair of air springs therein, wherein the second portion extends above the first portion. However, Dilling et al. does not disclose an elevated portion that would substantially reduce an amount of contact between a trailing arm and a boot of an air spring when the air spring is in the deflated condition and therefore does not render obvious that which is defined in claim 18. It is noted that the two-surface configuration of the Dilling et al. reference does not provide any additional clearance from the bladder of an air spring when the air spring is deflated.

Although numerous other claims were rejected for varying reasons, each of these claims are dependent from independent claims now believed to be in condition for allowance, and as a result, those rejections are believed to be moot.

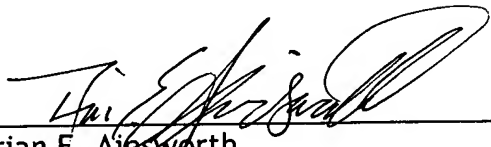
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Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-31 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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